

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
August 28th, 2018**

Call to order: Donnie Lee called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.

Attendance: Present: Debbie Braun, Donnie Lee, Cristal Logan, Charlie Bantis, Riley Tippet, Warren Klug, Patti Clapper, Linda Crockett, Jeanette Darnauer, Nina Eisenstat, Andrew Ernemann, Heather Steenge-Hart, Heather Kemp, Maria Morrow, Steve Skadron, and Bill Tomcich. Absent: Dave Ressler, John Rigney, Rose Abello, Jeff Bay, Simon Chen, Rob Ittner, Lisa LeMay, John Maloy, Tim Perry, and Laura Smith. Staff Present: Brittany, Eliza, Susan, Erik, John Davies

Approval of prior meeting minutes: Approved

Presentations:

Reese Henry – Mark Kavasch

We at Reese Henry want to say thank you to the Aspen Chamber for the opportunity to conduct a financial review. We were hired to complete the tax return and a review which is a step below an audit. Overall, the review went very well. Very limited adjustments were needed, and they were related to the move. Charlie Bantis signed the tax return, which is a public document and we will get that filed. There are some new rules for non-profits in 2018. In 2020 they are planning on changing leases to being capitalized, and they will want them on the balance sheet to be shown as liabilities. Everyone needs to stay diligent as the most common theft is misuse of company credit cards. Be familiar with your vendor list as we've seen a lot of phony invoices lately. The Chamber has a lot of great systems in place to prevent theft and fraud. They had 49 W-2's for the year which is a lot of opportunity for errors, but they did a great job. Overall the Chamber is financially healthy.

Pitkin County Solid Waste Center – Cathy Hall

I've been the Solid Waste Manager for 5 years now, and have been in the trash industry for the last 25. In the 80's there were a lot of new regulations that resulted in many landfills closing and there are no new landfills. The Pitkin County Landfill has 6 years of life left. Last year was a record breaking year for us. Since the economy is good, that means a lot of trash gets thrown away. The trash isn't glamorous, but it's where the county makes money. A landfill is the closest thing a county can have to owning a business. We operate on revenues and the landfill is responsible for paying for many programs. A 2015 waste characterization study found that 53% of the waste that gets buried could be diverted through existing programs. Organics is the largest category by weight of the general solid waste stream. 17% by weight was food. The average person throws away around 4.5 pounds, but in Aspen, its 9 pounds. That number is similar to other resort towns due to the tourists. The biggest area of opportunity here are construction and demolition. We had 38,226 tons in 2017. We are looking at all kinds of diversion incentives. Recycling is more expensive than trash, as there is a lot that goes into recycling. It has to be clean and it has to get sorted in Denver. We have had a Use Again program since November 2016 and have collected 206k pounds of clothing. Once a month it is taken to Denver and then redistributed all over the world, primarily to South America. We've been collecting mattresses since January 2017, which take up a lot of room at landfills. We send them to Denver and work with Spring Back Colorado. They charge a fee of \$25 per mattress, but employee people with drug or legal issues. They strip the beds down and recycle 90% of each one. The wooden frames are turned into mulch and the textiles into insulation. They also create new beds for jails and public facilities. We have a new program this past year where we collect books and send to low income families. We won a state grant and started the SCRAPs program where we bag and sell compost. It's the greatest recyclable material. It's local and stays local. 4,500 tons of finished compost so far. We also have an electronics recycling program out of Denver called Blue Star Company that employs autistic people. On October 6th we are having an e-waste event at the landfill to dispose of electronics at no charge. People need to really reduce, reuse, refuse and recycle to care for our community. Come check out the landfill to see all that we do.

Chair's comments: I can't believe it's already the end of August. We've had the Lake Christine Fire and a lot going on this summer. We have a great Finance Committee with the Chamber and things are functioning well. Thank you to Debbie and good job with a good financial review. We have such a phenomenal community and the Arts are such a big part of that. It's a very unique aspect of our community.

President's comments: Rob Ittner was unable to make this meeting, but shared the sales tax report. Dave Ressler said Aspen Valley Hospital has a Green Up Clean Up recycling and composting program to help save the landfill. September 8th is the community picnic at the hospital. As follow up to our last meeting and the SWOT analysis; the State is now reconvening with stakeholders on October 4th. I met with Sara Ott in reference to a Food & Wine work session. The City is doing work sessions in October around budgeting. When they get to Parks and Recreation, a conversation can take place within the line item, but we will not do a special work session on this particular issue. Thank you for all of the positive comments about Food & Wine. I'm heading to Boise, Idaho for the DMA West Conference on September 10th and I'm happy to announce that I'm the President Elect of that association. Jeff Bay has offered a two night FAM trip while I'm in Boise to check out their properties. Cristal will cover the Arts & Culture update. Jennifer Carney is out on a 60 day medical leave and Brittany Zanin is filling in for her. Noel Chiarelli is also going to be helping part time. Destination Marketing is busy with wedding FAMs and public relations. The City has been working on SHIFT. We have been getting a lot of pushback on the high prices of parking from visitors.

PA Committee: Public Affairs Committee met and was led by Jeanette. We gave feedback on SHIFT. It was a very productive session. Debbie has been invited to attend the Uphill Economy Task Force. Thank you to Erik for the Sandwich Board meeting and to Charlie for attending.

Arts & Culture Update: At our last meeting I mentioned we've been having conversation with a small group of non-profit CEO's. We met with Julia and now Eliza for the marketing. Our discussions were about how the CEO's feel Aspen as a community doesn't prioritize Arts & Culture. Other towns seem to make it a priority and that's not the case here. From a marketing standpoint, we market the outdoors and free events. We went into specific ideas about adding banners and kiosks, but it's difficult to have banners and panels or in general advertising. Debbie has been wonderful advocating with the City and the airport for these issues. A member of the group questioned if there was enough representation on this Board, and yes, there is a seat from The Aspen Institute and from the Aspen Music Festival. The CEO's don't realize all that ACRA is doing, but they are doing a lot and can possibly tweak to do more.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Director's Comments

Patti Clapper: Unfortunately I have to leave early, but I wanted to announce the passing of Jack Hatfield. He asked for one hell of a party. Memorial services will be held September 13th.

Warren Klug: Congratulations to ACRA on a good review. Aspen Square's business was down in July. Unsure of winter as there has not been strong advanced bookings. Planning on a great winter though. Delighted to be retired.

Steve Skadron: Thank you for the feedback on parking. It's been a very experimental process and we are learning. A big issue with City Council are the City offices. We've moved part of the meeting to tonight. There are two options. The original option that we've been sued over and the other is the Mark Hunt building. We will discuss tonight at 4 p.m. Our second issue is the RFTA ballot. We are piecing together a strategy to get it passed as a property tax. The second half of the Castle Creek Bridge resumes on September 4th until October 31st. They got a lot done in the spring and are looking forward to wrapping the project up.

Heather Steenge-Hart: Thank you all for a great meeting. We've seen a bit of an upswing for this coming winter due to the Starwood / Marriott merger. We are looking at closing on October 22nd or 29th for a few weeks. Details to come.

Nina Eisenstat: I'm surprised by Rob's report about the summer for restaurants. I've been hearing very strong results from other establishments. Hearing that the challenge of finding good employees continues. I've chatted with several people about the Food & Wine sod issues, nobody seems to have strong feelings as it is a signature Aspen event.

Linda Crockett: Our fall semester started yesterday at CMC. Enrollment is strong, not a major increase but its good. We go opposite of the economy; when people are working we don't see major growth. We hired site planners this spring to see what we could build on site with capital expansion for the Aspen campus. We are hiring two full time employees. A maintenance manager and a front desk enrollment specialist. Looking at a series of outdoor summit meetings all over the CMC campuses. There will be a breakfast at our campus the first week of October. Please reach out if interested in participating.

Riley Tippet: June and July were quite strong but August has been a bit weird. September really depends on the leaves, but it is usually a pretty strong month. It's a great time to get out and see what Aspen has to offer. Winter is up in the air, looking positive but there is a hangover effect from poor snow last winter. Snowmass tourism met and so far winter is looking very last minute as people are hesitant. That is a testament to our airport, as people used to have to plan in advance, but it is now very easy to find good flights in and out of Aspen. SkiCo put out an article about raising their wages. We are hiring and looking at raising our wages, offering Premier passes, end of season bonuses, and exploring housing opportunities to get great employees. We have to get creative. Come on snow!

Bill Tomcich: Gave an occupancy update. July was down 3.2% but we still had 80.2% occupancy in Aspen. Still one of the strongest July's since 2006. Snowmass surpassed 70% which set a record for July. It was nowhere near as bad as we feared. August was excellent for Snowmass. The Tough Mudder and Labor Day weekend look strong. The rest of fall is pacing slightly down, but we've seen many last minute reservations. Hopefully the good weather will continue. Gave an airport update. Very strong flights. American and United are continuing Chicago route until the 1st week of October. Delta's SLC route is very affordable – around \$120 each way. Delta is very committed to the Aspen market and want to stay competitive against United. All three airlines are flying through the fall. It's a competitive market. United is experimenting with lower fares from Aspen to Denver as they are missing a lot of locals. December and January are looking a bit soft so far and will depend on snowfall. February looks good. Stay Aspen Snowmass is running a Labor Day flash sale with a \$200 flight credit.

Maria Morrow: Nothing to add.

Cristal Logan: We have had a great summer at the Aspen Institute and our new President is great. He will be back this fall and we will plan a reception for September 27th at the new Albright Pavilion. We hope everyone can make it. Details will come soon.

Heather Kemp: Retail has been very strong lately. We've heard complaints about parking, but it seems to always be an issue. There are always spaces, but it's very expensive. Everyone in retail is struggling to find good employees. Very interested to see how new housing projects are going. We've had a lot of calls about late summer weddings. It will be interesting to see how September goes with the Castle Creek Bridge construction resuming.

Jeanette Darnauer: Everyone has talked consistently all summer about not being able to find employees. Thank you to everyone who has participated in conversations and surveys for SHIFT. We've come up with some very good ideas. We are putting together reports this week to give to City Council. We hope they will take the feedback we've received seriously. Everyone is appreciative for the outreach. We still need a lot of data before coming up with actual plans, and are trying outreach up and down the valley where people are.

Charlie Bantis: Chase Bank is opening on the Hyman Mall soon. Unsure of the location; it may be a temporary location and they may be working with Mark Hunt on a new space. No idea how they will staff the branch with all of the struggles everyone is having finding employees. First Western Trust went public in late July, which is something we have been working on for the last three years. We are one of the only publicly traded Colorado banks.

Erik Klanderud: The ski pass deadline is September 14th for the super early pricing. You can save \$510 on the Premier pass. We will be at the gondola ticket office on the 12th – 14th handling ski passes and memberships. The Afternoon Blend is on Thursday September 6th co-hosted by Aspen Skiing Company. Upload on the gondola starts at 2:30 p.m. We are bringing in a guest speaker for climate change and its impact on the ski / tourism industry. Pricing for the event is \$40 for members and \$55 for non-members.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.